

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1-36 (Canceled)

37. (New) A computer system comprising:

a processor;

a storage facility coupled to the processor; and

program code, for execution by the processor, to implement:

a first plurality of interfaces to initiate reading of packet meta-data and packets of payload data from the storage facility; and

a second plurality of interfaces to output streaming media packets to a requesting client system, wherein the second plurality of interfaces collectively support a plurality of streaming media protocols, and wherein the streaming media packets comprise the packet meta-data and the packets of payload data and are determined in response to a streaming media protocol requested by the client system.

38. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the first plurality of interfaces are streaming media protocol independent and the second plurality of interfaces are streaming media protocol dependent.

39. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the packet meta-data and the packets of payload data are read from the storage facility at a pace independent of the requested pace for the streaming media packets.

40. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the first plurality of interfaces are implemented in a first software layer of the computer system and the second plurality of interfaces are implemented in a second software layer of the computer system.

41. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, further comprising:

program code to implement a third plurality of interfaces configured to receive the packet meta-data, configured to adjust the packet meta-data to form adjusted packet meta-data, and to output the adjusted packet meta-data;

wherein the streaming media packets are also determined in response to the adjusted packet meta-data.

42. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the requested streaming media protocol is one of: Microsoft Media Streaming, Real Time Streaming Protocol, RealNetworks RealSystem.

43. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the second plurality of interfaces are configured to output a streaming media packet at a requested time.

44. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein the second plurality of interfaces configured to output streaming media packets to the client system after packet meta-data and packets of payload data have been read from the storage facility.

45. (New) A computer system as recited in claim 37, wherein sizes of the streaming media packets depend upon the requested streaming media protocol.

46. (New) A streaming media cache comprising:

a storage facility to cache streaming media data received from a remote server; a protocol independent subsystem to initiate reading of packet meta-data and packets of payload data from the storage facility; and a protocol dependent subsystem to output streaming media packets to a client system, wherein the protocol dependent subsystem supports a plurality of streaming media protocols, and wherein the streaming media packets comprise the packet meta-data and the packets of payload data and are determined in response to a streaming media protocol requested by the client system, and wherein the packet meta-data and the packets of payload data are read from the storage facility at a pace independent of the requested pace for the streaming media packets.

47. (New) A streaming media cache as recited in claim 46, further comprising:

a plurality of interfaces to receive the packet meta-data, configured to adjust the packet meta-data to form adjusted packet meta-data, and to output the adjusted packet meta-data;

wherein the streaming media packets are also determined in response to the adjusted packet meta-data.

48. (New) A streaming media cache as recited in claim 46, wherein the requested streaming media protocol is one of: Microsoft Media Streaming, Real Time Streaming Protocol, RealNetworks RealSystem.

49. (New) A streaming media cache as recited in claim 46, wherein the protocol dependent subsystem is configured to output a streaming media packet at a requested time.

50. (New) A streaming media cache as recited in claim 46, wherein the protocol dependent subsystem is configured to output streaming media packets to the client system after packet meta-data and packets of payload data have been read from the storage facility.

51. (New) A streaming media cache as recited in claim 46, wherein sizes of the streaming media packets depend upon the requested streaming media protocol.

52. (New) A method of streaming media data from a streaming media cache, the method comprising:

receiving, at the streaming media cache, a first request for streaming media data from a first client system, the first request identifying streaming media data and a streaming media format supported by the first client system;

determining whether the streaming media data requested by the first client system is in storage at the streaming media cache;

if the streaming media data requested by the first client system is in storage at the streaming media cache, then streaming the streaming media data from the streaming media cache to the first client system, in accordance with the streaming media format supported by the first client system;

receiving, at the streaming media cache, a second request for streaming media data from a second client system, the second request identifying streaming media data and a streaming media format supported by the second client system, wherein the streaming media format supported by the second client system is different from the streaming media format supported by the first client system; and

determining whether the streaming media data requested by the second client system is in storage at the streaming media cache; and

if the streaming media data requested by the second client system is in storage at the streaming media cache, then streaming the streaming media data requested by the second client from the streaming media cache to the second client system, in accordance with the streaming media format supported by the second client system.

53. (New) A method as recited in claim 52, wherein streaming the streaming media data from the streaming media cache to the first client system comprises:

reading from a storage device one or more data objects that include payload packets comprising media data formatted in accordance with the streaming media format supported by the first client system.

54. (New) A method as recited in claim 53, wherein streaming the streaming media data from the streaming media cache to the first client system further comprises:

reading from a storage device one or more data objects that include meta-data associated with the payload packets.

55. (New) A method as recited in claim 52, further comprising:

if the streaming media data requested by the first client system is not in storage at the streaming media cache, then communicating a request for the streaming media data to a server storing the streaming media data requested by the first client system;

receiving, at the streaming media cache, the streaming media data requested by the first client from the server; and

storing, at the streaming media cache, the streaming media data requested by the first client.